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THE CONDITION OF THE NATIVES OF SOUTH-EAST AFRICA IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, ACCORDING TO THE EARLY PORTUGUESE DOCUMENTS.

By Rev. H. A. JUNOD.

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THE CONDITION OF THE NATIVES OF SOUTH-EAST AFRICA IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, ACCORDING TO THE EARLY PORTUGUESE DOCUMENTS.

By Rev. Henri A. Junod

What is the origin of the South African Bantu, and, if this cannot be discovered, what are, at least, the influences which have brought about the peculiar features of their social and psychic life, their customs, their special ideas, their characteristic rites? Did they borrow them from other people, or are these customs absolutely underived? What is, in one word, the secret of their past?

If we consult the Natives themselves on these questions, on which every student of mankind would be very glad to get a trustworthy answer, we must confess that the information they give is very unsatisfactory. They still remember vaguely some historical events which happened a hundred years ago. They have kept the memory of political changes and of migrations which took place from 200 to 400 years ago. They possess the genealogies of chiefs of their clans which number eight to twelve names, and which may reach somewhat further back in the past. But legendary traits are mingled with the historical facts, and, when asked about their origin, they either say: "We do not know," or they answer by the well-known story of the reed and the chameleon. This is pure myth.*

The Portuguese displayed considerable activity in this part of the world during the sixteenth century. Have they not left documents which would supplement this scanty Native information? In a review of the first volume of the book just referred to, the *Lourenço Marques Guardian* put forth some hypotheses on the origin of the Delagoa Bay Natives, and expressed the wish that I should go to Lisbon and there study the Portuguese archives, so as to throw more light on the question. It happens, in fact, that I have lately had the opportunity of staying in Portugal for two months, and I tried to find those precious documents. Owing to the courtesy of the directors of the Geographical Society, I had access to their fine library, but I came to the conclusion that sixteenth century documents on the Natives of South Africa are very few. The best report dealing with our tribes is certainly the book of the Dominican brother João dos Santos, *Ethiopia oriental e varias historias de cousas notaveis do Orient*, printed in Evora in 1609, in which he describes what he saw in Sofala and Tete. Is this work, in which the splendours of the Monomotapa kingdom are revealed, entirely trustworthy? It is hard to say. As it deals rather with Central than with Southern Africa, and as Dr. Theal in his book, *The Portuguese in East Africa*, has sufficiently made it known to modern readers,

* Compare my work on "The Life of a South African Tribe," Vol. II. p. 326-328.

I did not spend much time in studying it. The Decades of João de Barros and of Diogo de Couto also contain much interesting material, but they relate military feats accomplished by the Portuguese in India and East Africa rather than ethnographical facts. The most interesting documents which I met with are the reports of four shipwrecks which occurred on the coast of Natal and Delagoa Bay between 1550 and 1598, which were incorporated by Gomes de Brito in his *Historia tragicomaritima*, published in 1736 in ten volumes. This extensive work was reproduced in 1904 in the *Bibliotheca de classicos portuguezes*, and the wrecks which interest us more directly are described in Vols. I, IV and V of that edition. I have found since then that these stories were reproduced in Vols. I and II of the Records of South East Africa, published by the Cape Government. The Portuguese text is given, together with the English translation, and one may be thankful that these records, written without any preconceived idea in the most genuine and simple way, historical documents of the best type, have thus been put within the reach of the South African public.

The same collection contains letters of two Jesuit Brethren who made an attempt to convert the Natives in the neighbourhood of Inhambane in 1560-1562. These letters coming from men whose first object was to influence the minds and hearts of the Natives and who stayed amongst them a certain time, trying to understand them, have even more value than the records of the shipwrecks for the solution of the question which I have put in the beginning.

I confess that all these documents are not absolutely new, but they have not yet been studied with a sufficient knowledge of the Natives of to-day, and they certainly contain most precious details on the condition of the Black tribes of South East Africa 300 to 350 years ago. Shall we find in them glimpses of a further past? This remains to be seen.

In the first part of this paper, I intend giving the contents of the documents on which our study bears and a short resumé of the doings of their heroes; then, we shall extract from them what information they contain about the Natives of these prehistoric times, more particularly about those of Delagoa Bay, who played quite a prominent part in these tragic events.

Part I. The Documents.

Delagoa Bay was discovered in the beginning of the 16th century by Antonio de Campo, the captain of one of the ships which composed the second fleet of Vasco da Gama. It was only in 1554 that two Portuguese of Mozambique, Lourenço Marques and Antonio Caldeira undertook an exploration in the country round it. They were very successful. Having penerated into the interior by a river which reaches the sea on the 25° South latitude (evidently the Limpopo) they found the Natives disposed to sell copper, "which they had in abundance"; they also

saw a great many elephants, and the Blacks sold them tusks on very favourable conditions. For some beads worth three vintens (three pence) they could get ivory worth 100 cruzades (which means in the present currency about £7). Lourenço Marques sent a request to the Vice Rey of India, Dom João de Castro, who forwarded it to the King of Portugal, Dom João III, and the King gave orders to provide the explorer with a ship loaded with goods for barter in the Bay. This was the beginning of regular commercial transactions between the Portuguese of Mozambique and the Natives of these regions. Each year a "pangaio," *viz.*, a boat made of planks sewn together, went to Delagoa; the sailors stayed in the little uninhabited Elephant Island (which D. de Couto calls Sentimuro) for months, feeling themselves there better protected against any possible attack and visiting the interior as far as they could, following the rivers; they exchanged their goods, which consisted of beads of iron, and stuff, against ivory and occasionally amber. Later on, in 1580, the pagaio came only every second year. A regular traffic was also started with Inhambane in 1550 to 1590.

These facts must be known in order that one may understand that, for those rescued from the wrecked ships, the Bay of Lourenço Marques or Rio de Santo Espirito was the great hope of salvation. It was also called Bahia de Alagoa, the Bay of the Lake, because the Portuguese believed that one or two of the rivers flowing into it came from a big lake in the interior, that from which flowed also the Nile to the North and the Zambesi or Cuama to the West.

1. *The Galleon S. João.*

This was the richest of all the ships that had yet left India for Portugal. Her cargo was said to be worth one conto of gold. One can guess the importance of the galleon by the fact that the crew and passengers numbered about 600 souls, 200 Portuguese and 300 to 400 slaves. She was wrecked on the coast somewhere on 31° S.; 40 Portuguese and 60 slaves died, and the 500 persons remaining, amongst them some women of the best families of Portugal, succeeded in saving only very little of their goods and a portion of their provision of rice. Their journey to Delagoa Bay has been told by an anonymous writer, who obtained the particulars from the "guardian" of the ship, Alvarao Fernandes. The captain, Manuel Souza, took the lead; he had with him his wife, Dona Leonora, and his uncle, Panteleon de Sá. They decided to follow the border of the sea, and started on the 7th of July. The distance to be covered was 181 leagues in a direct line; but they travelled more than 300 leagues, owing to the difficulty of the road. The first month they lived very poorly on their rice; later on, they began to buy some food from the Natives, but it seems that they did not know how to deal properly with them; they often had to fight with them in order to open their way; they endured untold sufferings from hunger,

still more from thirst, living on fruit of the veld, on shells and fish of the sea. More than 300 died on the road. After three months they reached the Bay. The chronicler says:

> They then met with a Kaffir, master of two villages, an old man who seemed to them of good condition, to be well disposed, and who proved himself to be such by the hospitality which they received from him; he told them not to go further, but to settle with him, and that he would do his best to help them. indeed, this country was poor in means of subsistence, not that it could not produce them, but because the Kaffirs were people who only sowed very few seeds and ate nothing but the beasts which they killed.

This man was the chief of Inhaca to whom Lourenço Marques had given the surname of Garcia de Sa, the name of the commander of Malacca, because his features were somewhat like those of that official. He tried to keep the party near him, telling them that on the Northern side of the Bay, there was a chief with whom he was fighting, a great robber who would certainly do them harm. The Portuguese, wishing to show their gratitude for the kind reception received from the Inhaca chief, consented to help him to subjugate another petty chief, six leagues to the South, who had revolted against him. So Pantaleon de Sá and twenty white men accompanied the 500 warriors of the native king and defeated his enemy, bringing back all his cattle as a prize. The Portuguese still numbered 120. But they insisted on going forward. They crossed a river (one now called the Maputo River), and with great difficulty a second one (Tembe and Umbelozi). But, during the crossing, Manuel de Souza lost patience and, with his spear, he threatened the Natives, who were to take the white men over in canoes. His companions told him to take care, that this action would bring disaster on the whole party. But he was out of his senses. His reason was giving way under the burden of his responsibilities and the greatness of his sufferings. They all crossed the river, but on the other side (which is the present Matjolo country), the native chief compelled them to give up their guns, saying his people would not dare to stay with white men as long as these had these frightful engines in their possession; then he scattered them all over the land, and when they were totally unable to defend themselves, the Kaffirs robbed them of everything they possessed. They stripped them of their clothes. For a time Manuel de Souza and his wife were spared this disgrace, but they had to submit to it after all. Dona Leonora, who was a *fidalga* (a person of noble extraction), after having behaved in an admirable way all through the journey, was so grieved by this shameful treatment and the death of her child, which then took place, that she died miserably. Her husband buried her and fled to the bush, half mad. Then he disappeared,, probably eaten by wild beasts. His rings were found later on in a forest of the Mpfumu country, and the chief showed them to the Portuguese who visited him. Most of the companions of M. de Souza met the same fate. The ship for Delagoa Bay had already

returned to Mozambique. The one which came in 1553 found eight Portuguese still living and seventeen slaves, who were brought back to that town on May 25th, 1553. The narrative of the terrible loss of the San Joâo is well written and most touching, but not being by a witness, it contains very little information on the Natives, no names at all; so it is of no great use for our purpose.

2. *The San Bento (St. Benoit)*, 1554.

The story of this wreck, on the contrary, is most interesting, as it was written by Manuel de Mesquita Perestrello, a well educated man who was one of the passengers. The ship contained about 400 persons, and 322 were rescued, 98 Portuguese and 224 slaves. They had managed to save a gun, twelve loads of ammunition, and many spears. They came on shore at about the same place as the San Joâo, and also followed the road by the border of the sea. But they had very few goods for barter, and thus suffered terribly from hunger. Their captain, F. de Alvares Cabral, died when crossing Santa Luzia River; they wandered fourteen days round a bay, which they called Rio dos Medôas de Ouro, and which must be Kosi Bay, and lost not less than twenty persons during that time. A tribe of robbers attacked them in these regions: some shots from the only gun saved made such a wonderful impression that as the chronicler says,

> When they heard the noise, it was as if devils had jumped on them; they scattered and fled so quickly that they disappeared in a minute.

But fighting with Natives was dangerous for them as it cut short any supply of food they might have obtained from them. A terrible famine began to decimate them. Perestrello describes it in the following words:—

> Some of us were forced to eat their own boots . . . . and if someone found a bone of a wild beast quite dry, as white as snow, they ate it, reducing it to charcoal as if it were a real treat. All were looking at the veld to see if they could discover any herb, bone or insect . . . . and if one of these things appeared before them, they all ran to take it and often they quarrelled, friend with friend, relative with relative, for a locust, or an insect, or a caterpillar. After having walked three days doing this, we reached a hill where they were many wild onions; though we suspected them of being poisonous, we took them and made our meal of them, and it pleased Our Lord that they did not harm us.

Four sailors were then sent forward to inform the captain of the ship in Delagoa Bay of the presence of this party, if perchance the ship had not yet returned to Mozambique. Dying of hunger they killed a native on their way and ate him. This did not prepare a nice reception for the party coming behind. They had one day to fight in the same circumstances as the soldiers of Leonidas:—

> The Kaffirs attacked us, throwing so many assegais at us that all the air was full of a cloud of them.

The fight lasted two hours and, if they escaped, it was only owing to their gun which struck the Natives with terror and

cleared the way. Another time, one of the enemy having been killed with the assegai, the whole party discussed if they would not eat him to relieve the pangs of hunger.

According to what was whispered it was not the first time that the misfortunes of this journey had pushed some to taste human flesh. But the captain did not consent to it, saying that, should the news scatter, that we eat natives, these would flee before us to the end of the world and would persecute us with much more hatred.

They were at their worst, when happily a messenger came from the chief of Inhaca; he had heard of them and offered them hospitality, saying that he was the brother of the White men who frequently came to the Bay, and to whom he sold much ivory in exchange for beads (contas). This was a great relief. The Inhaca subjects consented to sell produce for money which the Natives further South had always refused. Those who reached the Bay were fifty-six Portuguese and six slaves. They had travelled for 72 days and covered 300 leagues.

What a miserable life they led in Inhaca's country for five months, decimated by hunger and leopards, covered with vermin, obliged to cut wood, to carry water for the Natives in order to receive some food and save their lives. The report of Perestrello describes it in most touching terms. At last, in November, 1554, Perestrello, who was settled in the island of Inhaca, one day saw a sail on the sea, a ship: he fell on his knees, blessing God for His mercy; this was salvation. But of all the party, only twenty Portuguese and three slaves succeeded in reaching Mozambique. The story of Perestrello is full of charm and of interesting remarks. As he remained five months at the Bay, he was able to see much of the Natives, and his report contains many precious details about the subject which interests us.

3. *The San Thomé.*

Thirty-five years later, in 1589, another ship was lost in the neighbourhood of Delagoa Bay. This was the *San Thomé*, whose captain was Dom Paolo de Lima. On March 22nd, she was wrecked on the shore of the Terra dos Fumos, the country of the smokes, so named by the Portuguese narrators because, when passing near it, they always noticed much smoke, a proof that it was thickly populated.* Ninety-six persons were saved. In this ship travelled also Diogo de Couto, the author of the Decades, one of the principal historians of that time. He wrote the record of the year 1611. This is also the work of a witness and not of an ordinary individual, but of a practised writer, of a man who took an interest in the land and its inhabitants, and possessed a real gift of observation.

The country of Fumos is on 27½° south latitude; it is the present Amatongaland, only 50 leagues distant from Lourenço

* One must not confound the Terra dos Fumos with the country of Fumo or Vumo or Rumo on the North of the Bay. *Fumos*, in the first case, is the Portuguese word for smoke, in the second the name of a native chief, or, rather, clan, as will be seen later on.

Marques. So the rescue of the party seemed to be an easy thing. However, the travellers had any amount of difficulties in reaching the kraal of Inhaca. There they heard that the Mozambique ship had left the Bay ten days before. The chief who behaved very well towards the unfortunate Portuguese led them at their request to the Island Setimuro, where they found more than fifty huts built by the traders There they settled, but as the ship had gone, most of the sailors crossed the Bay in two boats which they found there, wishing to continue their journey to the North and to send larger vessels from Inhambane or Sofala to save the thirty-six who had remained behind. The two boats were separated from each other by a terrible hurricane. The smaller one found the mouth of the Manhiça (Nkomati) River,* reached the capital of the chief of Manhiça, and had the good fortune to find there Jeronymo de Leitaô, the master of the Mozambique ship, whose pangaio had been wrecked near the Rio do Ouro (Limpopo), and who had taken a refuge near the Manhiça chief. Jeronymo immediately sent a letter to Sofala to ask for help, and the whole party crossed the Bay and joined the others at Manhica. The second boat was wrecked not far from the mouth of the Limpopo, but the men were saved and well received by the chief Inhapula, who gave them guides to go to Inhambane. They reached their destination, passing through different clans whose names Couto quotes carefully, thus giving us a precious account of the tribes between Lourenço Marques and Inhambane. Having found no help in this last port, they went on to Sofala. When they reached that place, a pangaio had already sailed to rescue Paolo de Lima and his party. But the old man died before that ship came. The report of Couto ends here; he does not say how many others left their bones on the shores of Delagoa Bay and how many returned to Mozambique.

4. *The San Alberto.*

This was the last of the four wrecks. It took place in 1593, four years after that of the *San Thomé*. The ship had 347 passengers on board, 163 Portuguese and 194 slaves. She went ashore on the Natal coast, in the same region as the *San Joâo* and the *San Bento*. But the story of the rescue of the party is wonderful. It illustrates the old Greek proverb, "An army of deer commanded by a lion is stronger than an army of lions commanded by a deer." The captain of the party, Nuna Velho Pereira, was a man full of courage, of wisdom, and of personal

* The story as told by Diogo de Couto is almost impossible to understand in its actual form, as the manuscript was evidently altered. In its second half the word "Inhaca" is regularly employed instead of "Manhiça," and "Manhiça" instead of "Inhaca." . . . . As "Inhaca" is south and "Manhiça" north of the Bay, this error makes the movements of the party absolutely incomprehensible. Having discovered the mistake, which was committed probably by the printers later on, I have been able to restore the original text, and the whole story becomes quite clear.

force, who succeeded in saving 182 persons out of 285 who reached the shore. The voyage lasted three months, and covered more than 500 leagues. Having heard of the awful difficulties met by the *San João* and *San Bento's* crews, Pereira decided to travel inland and not along the coast, trusting that he would find more means of subsistence, and that the rivers would be easier to cross. His expectations were partially fulfilled. But what helped him most was the kindness united with firmness which he always showed to the natives, preventing his people from plundering the plantations, paying regularly for all that he bought by means of bits of copper and iron, adorning children and women with ordinary beads or beads of crystal taken from rosaries, which had happily come to the shore after the wreck, etc. Nuna Velho Pereira did so well that the Natives of Zululand said the white men were just like the black, and differed only from them in their colour. In some places, they kissed the Portuguese on their faces and accompanied them dancing and singing. How different from the dreadful experiences of the earlier parties. So his journey was a kind of triumphal crossing of all Caffraria (as the Portuguese called this coast) with almost no fighting; he bought a great number of cattle, which the party took with them, eating them when they had to cross deserts. They still had nineteen with them when they reached Inhaça; they had the good luck to find there the traders' ship, which only came every second year. Most of the party could embark in it for Mozambique.

The story of the wreck was written by João Baptista Lavanha, "Cosmografomór de Sua Magestade," in 1611, from a detailed account by the pilot of the ship. It contains the names of most of the petty chiefs which the party found from 32° south latitude up to Inhaça Island, and this list is most valuable.

Though the subject of this paper is the condition of the Natives in the 16th century, and not that of the Portuguese of that time, I will not proceed further without insisting on the strong religious faith which animated and comforted these men through the horrors of their peregrinations. The anonymous chronicler of the wreck of the *San João* says his aim in telling this story was to teach the men who travel on the sea to recommend themselves constantly to God and to the Virgin that she should pray for them all. In their order of march throughout the country they generally put in front a priest or the pilot carrying the crucifix. In all their misfortunes, they saw the finger of God, a punishment for their bad deeds. Relating the terrible journey round Kosi Bay, Perestrello says:

> No doubt, if someone had seen us, from the top of these hills (may he be one of the savages living in the midst of these inhabited mountains) marching naked, without boots, weary and strangers, lost, and in awful necessity, feeding on raw herbs, of which even we did not find enough for our needs, he would have thought we had gravely sinned against God, because, if our sins had been small, His mercy would not have allowed

such heavy punishment to fall on such miserable bodies. . . . . Having given up all hope of escaping from those marshes by human power, we resolved to have recourse to the Divine One. So, having all fallen on our knees, in prayer, we asked Our Lady by her holy Conception to obtain for us from her glorious Son another miracle similar to that which He made for the Children of Israel when they left Egypt and passed the Red Sea . . . . . that we might that same day find a way through the marsh which seemed impossible to cross, and there, owing to her guidance, we found the way through to the other side. Having witnessed such an evident miracle, we again bent our knees, promising to make a pilgrimage to Nossa Senhora de Guadeloupa and a solemn missa . . . . . and, in order to show us clearly by whose hand this work had been done, and that the manna of the desert would not be wanting, we found many cocoa nuts on wild palm trees, etc.

Perestrello certainly was a mystic, a mystic of the right sort; Lavanha is more matter of fact. He says he has written his report to give useful indications to the sailors who may fall into similar misfortune. However, in his story also, the religious fervour is not wanting. See what Nuna Velho Pereira, the distinguished Captain of the rescued party did when taking leave of the Chief Gamabela, on 27° South Latitude, a few days before reaching the end of his travels:

We were all thankful for the kind welcome received from this Kaffir; and he himself was no less pleased to have offered it to us. So he asked Nuna Velho to give him something which he might keep in remembrance of him and of all the Portuguese accompanying him. Nuna Velho answered that he would act according to the request, and would give him the most precious treasure which was in the world. So taking the cross which was hanging on his chest, and taking off his hat, he raised his eyes to Heaven and with great devotion kissed it; then he gave it to the Portuguese who were near him, who performed the same ceremony, and to the chief, saying this was the sacred token of his friendship, and that he ought to show it the same respect as he had seen our people do. The barbarian took it and kissed it with the same reverence, putting it to his eyes; so did all the Natives. And seeing this, Nuna Velho ordered the carpenter to make a cross from the branch of a tree. It was made and was eight palms in length. Nuna Velho handed it to Gamabela, telling him that on such a tree the Author of Life had overcome death by his own death, that it was the remedy against death, the health of the sick and that by the power of this sign the great Emperors had won victories. . . So that the chief ought to put the cross on his hut and every morning, when leaving his hut, he ought to show respect to this cross by kissing it, and to adore it on his knees, asking help of it with confidence when health was failing amongst his subjects or when rain was wanting for his gardens. . . . With these words he gave this royal trophy and unique glory of Christianity to the headman, who took it on his shoulders, and with his men, who numbered about 500, he went to his village to do what Nuna Velho had told him. In this way the Holy Cross was planted by this virtuous noble man in the very midst of Caffraria, centre of the heathenism over which to-day it is triumphant. . . . . May God Our Lord be pleased to enlighten the minds of these poor heathens, so that holding firmly that trustworthy Cross which remained amongst them, they may be saved from perdition and from the blindness in which they live.

Is not the religious candour of these men most touching? Of course, the hope of saving Native tribes from the power of heathenism by a mere substitution of the catholic rites for those of the animistic religion was most childish, and we know that other and more spiritual methods are needed to reach such an

end. However, there was an evident earnestness in those men of old, and their faith gave them strength and hope in their terrible journeys.

The same can certainly be said of the Jesuit Fathers who undertook to convert the Kalanga tribe, located thirty leagues to the South-West of Inhambane, and who wrote the letters to which I alluded. A son of the Chief of that tribe had gone to Mozambique, and, after having been received with great honours, he had been converted there and baptised. He therefore asked the Portuguese to send missionaries to his home. The request was agreed to, and Gonçalo da Silveira, a nobleman of Portugal, started in 1560, from Goa, with another brother, André Fernandez, to found the mission. They had great success; at least, they thought they had, because in the seven weeks of their stay at Otongwe, the capital of the chief Gamba, they baptized 450 persons, the chief, his sons, his wives, etc. Gonçalo, leaving the kraal after these few weeks, was most enthusiastic and hopeful. Alas! The good Fathers had considered as true conversion what was merely external adhesion to a doctrine very imperfectly understood. Fernandez, who had remained on the spot, very soon noticed it. The Black Christians did not abandon a single one of their superstitions, and, when warned by their missionary that the old animistic practices were inconsistent with their new faith, the Chief and his men rebuked him, left him all by himself, even threatened him, and the mission ended miserably after two years, leaving absolutely no trace. We shall see directly what customs and ideas Fernandez discovered amongst these strange converts.

Part II.—What these Documents Teach Us about the Natives of South-East Africa.

1. *The names of the sixteenth century tribes compared with those of to-day.*

First of all, what were the tribes inhabiting the South-East Coast of Africa in those times? According to Dr. Theal:

> In all the region traversed by the crews of the wrecked ships, not a single tribe is mentioned of the same name as any one still existing now;

and the Cape historiographer adds:

> It would serve no useful purpose to give the names of the tribes round Delagoa Bay and further north, as placed on record by the Portuguese writers, for, even if these names were accurate at the time, the communities that bore them have long since ceased to exist and never did anything to merit a place in history.

I am sorry to contradict the distinguished gentleman to whom we owe so much excellent work on South African history, but these assertions do not correspond to the facts. For convenience of discussion, let us consider first the Delagoa tribes, then those South of the Bay, and, thirdly, those North of Delagoa.

As regards the tribes round Delagoa Bay, with which I am best acquainted, the situation was almost exactly the same in 1550 as it was before the Gungunyana war. We possess three descriptions of the Bay, descriptions containing names: the first, of Perestrello (Hist. trag.-mar. I, p. 130); the second, of Diogo de Couto (IV, p. 100); the third, of Lavanha (V, p. 82). They mention five chiefs inhabiting the borders of the Bay, two on the Southern side, and three on the Northern side—Vumo, Lebombo and Manhiça. Let us consider these names.

The name of "Inhaca" (Nyaka), the old friend of the Portuguese, is well known up to this day, being applied especially to the island which lies to the East of the Bay. In former times, the kingdom of this Chief extended much further South. He is one of those who were deprived of their dominion by the growth of the Maputju clan, to which we shall refer directly. The Maputju defeated Mutlhobotahomu, the descendant of Nyaka, but this tribe still exists, though it has lost its independence, and "those of Nyaka" (*ba-ka-Nyaka*) still greet each other by saying: "*Shawan, Nyaka*"; "I greet you, Nyaka."

Zembe is evidently the actual *Tembe*, a clan which has played a great part in the history of the Bay, especially in the Anglo-Portuguese contest about the possession of the country. (See the Memoirs concerning the arbitration of President MacMahon, in 1873). Why the old Portuguese writers spell Zembe instead of Tembe I cannot explain. This is probably a mistake made by Perestrello, and adopted later on by Lavanha.*

The name "Tembe" applies in a special way to the ancient Chief who is considered as having founded the royal family, but also to all his descendants, by whom it is used as a kind of family name; it has also become the name of the river Tembe, called by the Natives *Mi-Tembe* (*viz.*, daughter of Tembe, as rivers are considered as feminine by these tribes.†

On the Northern side we find mentioned *Rumo* (I, p. 130; IV, p. 102), or *Vumo* (IV, p. 103), or *Fumo* (V, p. 83), evidently Mpfumo, the most celebrated of the Delagoa little kingdoms, which ceased to exist as an independent clan after the war of 1894. *Mena Lebombo* is probably Libombo, who was one of the first invaders of the Nondwane country on the Western border of the estuary of the Nkomati. This word *Mena*, put by Perestrello before Lebombo, means: I, myself. The chronicler may have heard that Chief tell his name by saying: "*Hi mena Lebombo*"; "I am Lebombo"; and he believed this *Mena* to be a part of the name. Lebombo was first located in the Lebombo hills.

Manhiça is well known up to this day, and the "*ba-ka-*

* Diogo de Couto does not mention this name.

† "The Life of a South African Tribe," II, p. 301.

Manyisa" form one of the most numerous clans of the Ba-Ronga.*

If we consider the map of the country as it is to-day, we see that two or three names are wanting in these three descriptions: Maputju (Maputo), Matjolo (Matolla), and Mazwaya (Magaia); but we can very well account for this want; in fact, these three clans are of modern origin. The Maputju and Matjolo are younger branches of the Tembe and Mpfumo royal families, which severed themselves from the main branch and made themselves independent in relatively modern times. Maputju was the younger brother of Muhari, the fourth Chief in the Tembe genealogy, and he managed to found his own kingdom, probably in the course of the eighteenth century, conquering Nyaka, Buyingane, and many others, probably destroying the Makomata mentioned by Diogo de Couto, with their Chief Viragune (?.. a name which does not sound much like Bantu). The Magaia, or more correctly pronounced *Mazwaya*, emigrated from the Lebombo hills after Mena Lebombo overcame this latter Chief, as well as the primitive inhabitants (the Mahlangana, Honwana and Nkumba), and extended over both banks of the Lower Nkomati, probably encroaching on the territory of Manhiça. One of the first chiefs quoted in the Mazwaya genealogy is Ngomana. This name is also encountered in the description of Diogo de Couto under the form Angomanes, and is applied to a chief living in a locality whose description well answers to the old abode of the Mazwaya clan in the Lebombo hills.

My conclusion is that in the middle of the sixteenth century the Native population round Delagoa Bay was composed almost

* As regards the names given by the Portuguese chroniclers to rivers, there are many difficulties in these reports. When coming from the South, the first river met is that now called the Maputo, and the second is the Tembe. Strange to say, the two chroniclers of the XVIth century who mention the river Tembe, Perestrello and Lavanha, apply that name to the first river, "that which separates the country of Inhaca from that of Zembe." The first river is also called by Lavanha Mclengana. There is, not far from the mouth of the Maputo River, a hill still called Nkelengen, and this is probably the origin of Mclengana. Diogo de Couto calls the Maputo River Belingane, saying that this is also the name of a kingdom. No doubt this is Buyingane, name of a chief who was located near the mouth of the river and who was conquered by the Maputju, but whose clan still exists in the same conditions as that of Nyaka. The country is still called Ka Buyingane.

To the second river, the Mitembe, Diogo de Couto and Lavanha apply the name of Anzete, or Ansate. This seems to be to be a corruption of the word Usutu or Lisutu (Umzuti on the Portuguese map of 1873) which is the old name of one of the branches of the Maputo River, the other being the Lipongolo. I believe there has been a confusion made by the chroniclers between these two rivers. As regards the Manyisa River, there is no doubt about its identification. It is the Nkomati of to-day; but Natives do not call it by that name in this part of its course; they call it Morako (hence the name Morakwen, Marracuéne). They may have termed it *"nambu wa ka Manyisa," viz.*, the river flowing in the Manyisa country, and the chroniclers have mistaken this expression for the name of the river itself.

of the same elements as to-day, and that the Native traditions account perfectly for all the changes that have taken place. Thus it is not true to say that these communities "have long since ceased to exist." It is also an error to pretend that they "have done nothing worth mentioning in the history of South Africa." For a long time before the European or Asiatic traders occupied the high land of South Africa, the tribes round Delagoa Bay acted as intermediaries between the White merchants and the tribes of the interior; the Mpfumo clan, especially, was known as a clan of merchants; large caravans were organised to carry clothing, beads, and other goods to Gazaland, to the Northern Transvaal, even to Zululand, and, in this way, these Natives really contributed to the civilisation of the country.

Let us pass now to the tribes South of Delagoa Bay, in the country now called Caffraria proper, Natal, Zululand, Amatongaland. In the report of Lavanha we find an extensive list of names of chiefs, or, rather, of headmen, through whose territory the party of San Alberto made its way. I reproduce it here with the Portuguese orthography, which is, of course, very defective, as these old chroniclers had no idea of the special Bantu sounds; so I add to these names their translation into what seems to have been their real pronunciation:

From 33° to 32° South Latitude we meet with the Tizombe clan, the Chiefs Luspance (Lusiphansi?) and Ubabu. From 32° to 31°, Inhancoza (Nyana-we-nkosi), Vibo. From 31° to 30°, Inhancunha (Nyankunya); Ospidanhama (Usipidanyama); Moxangala (Umshangala) mountains; Catine (Katini). From 30° to 29°: Inhanze; Mabomborucassobelo; Mocongolo (Umkongelo). From 29° to 28°: Mutangalu river; Gogambapolo; Gimbacucumba; Uquine Inhana (Ukinyane), near the Tugela River, called Uchugel. From 28° to 27°: Panjana; Malangana; Gamabela, Bambe. Further North begins the kingdom of Inhaca.

To these chiefs Diogo de Couto adds the following, in Amatongaland: Macalapapa, near the Santa Luzia Bay, and the Macomato tribe, with a chief called by him Viragune, between Mocalapapa and Inhaca.

I have not been able to ilentify those names with any still existing, except that of the river Uchugel, evidently the Tugela. The other river mentioned—Mutangala—is, according to Theal's supposition, the actual Umzimkulu; the Mashangale mountains would be the Ingele. It may be that some student of Native history dwelling in those countries will be able to find traces of some other words of the list. However, should this attempt prove unsuccessful, we should not wonder at the disappearance of those names, as we know what frightful disturbances the military raids of Chaka caused in the whole territory of Natal and Zululand from 1812 to 1820. This sanguinary despot destroyed, or amalgamated, hundreds of clans under his cruel rule. In Bird's "Annals of Natal," I have found a list of 93 tribes which were

living in Natal during the pre-Chaka period. However, I have not met any of Lavanha's names amongst them. It must be remarked that these were names of petty headmen, and not of clans, as is the case with those of the chiefs of Delagoa Bay Natives; so they may have been lost more easily.*

On the other hand, it is evident that the population of Natal and Zululand was very similar to that of to-day, and that the language spoken was already the actual Zulu-Xosa. This is proved by the many words reported by Lavanha (*e.g.*, ancosse, *inkosi*; inhancosa, *nyena-we nkosi*; sinkoa, *isinkwa*, bread); there were already many dialects of the same tongue, if we can rely on the information of the chronicler, who says:—

> The language is almost the same all through Caffraria and the difference between them (the dialects) is similar to that existing in the languages of Italy or between the common idioms of Spain.

The third region crossed by the shipwrecked men of the sixteenth century extends from the Limpopo to Inhambane. Diogo de Couto mentions the following tribes as having been met on the way by the travellers: Near the mouth of the Limpopo, on the Western shore, the kingdom of *Inhapule*; on the other side of the river, the *Manuça*. On the coast further North, the kingdom of *Inhabosse*, reaching the river called *Inharingue*. On this river were five other chiefs: *Panda, Monhibene, Javara, Gamba, Mokumba*; further on, they reached the river of Inhabane. We stop here, and do not follow them further North, to Sofala. Though I have never visited this part of the country myself, I have easily identified most of these names by questioning Natives coming from the region. Inhapule is evidently *Nyapure*, the name by which Natives still designate the country round the mouth of the Limpopo. This name is found on all the maps under the form of Inhampura. As is the case with Nyaka, the

* The only name which Theal proposes to correlate with an actual tribe is Bambe, as quoted by Diogo de Couto (IV, p. 100) and Lavanha (V, p. 76). He identifies it with the Abambo tribe, which he supposes to have come from the Zambesi between 1570 and 1593 and to have settled between the Umbelosi and the Umkumazi rivers and shortly afterwards to have broken up into numerous fragments amongst which were the Amazizi in the upper Tugela valley and the Amahlubi on the Buffalo river. Theal describes this horde as having devastated all the territory between the Zambesi and the Limpopo, only sparing boys and women who were incorporated in this mass. I do not know from what sources Theal draws all this information. It is true that the party of the *San Alberto* found the Natives to the South-West of Delagoa Bay in a certain state of unrest. Nuna Velho, before reaching Inhaca, thirty leagues from the Bay, met with a treacherous attempt on the part of a headman called Bembe to rob him of one of his cows. This occurred not far from Santa Luzia Bay; but it was by no means an attack by a powerful invading tribe. It is true that this "Ancosse" was an usurper, reigning by terror; however, the identification of this Bambe with the great Abambo tribe seems very doubtful. Moreover Perestrello, already in 1554, mentions a tribe of robbers in the same neighbourhood. Diogo de Couto in 1589 places the Vambe tribe further South, and says it occupies the great part of Natal. These are contradictory statements, and it seems to me difficult to prove any real relation between this Bambe and the supposed migration of the Abambo.

tribe no longer exists as independent, but the clan of Nyapure is still living, "these of Nyapure"; and they are saluted thus: "Good morning, Nyapure!" The same can be said of Inhaboze and Manuça. "Those of Manuse" have lost their self-governing condition, but people bearing that family or clan name are met with on the Eastern border of the Limpopo. The river Inharingue is the actual well-known *Inyarrime* lagoon, in the midst of the country of the so-called Ba-Chopi, and most of the little kingdoms here mentioned still exist. Gamba, the Mokalanga invader who was baptised by Gonçalvo da Silveira, is certainly the *Gwambe* clan whose chief Khugunu (Cogune) is one of the most important amongst the Chopi. Mocumba is probably *Nkumbi*, his neighbour, and these two clans seem to inhabit exactly the same tract of country where the Portuguese found them in the sixteenth century. Panda, still called by that name in the Portuguese orthography, but in reality Pande, is settled further North, directly westwards of Inhambane. Javara is either *Zavalla* or *Zavora*. Monhibene alone is unknown to my informants. As regards Inhambane, it is naturally the *Inhambane* of to-day, or more correctly pronounced *Nyembane*. It was already the name of a country round the Bay, not of a chief, though a chief of that name must, no doubt have lived there in former times.

The ethnology of the country between the Limpopo and Inhambane is rather complicated. We meet now with three main ethnic or linguistic elements in that region: (1) The *Ba-Lengi*, more commonly called *Ba-Chopi* (wrongly spelt "M'chopes" on certain maps); *viz.*, "those who are transfixed with weapons" (as their country was the favourite hunting, or, rather, raiding ground of Gungunyana); they occupy the border of the sea in the southern part of the region. (2) The Tonga-Nyembane*; *viz.*, the tribe round Inhambane who speak a peculiar language, the Gitonga. (3) The Ba-Tswa, who are but a branch of the big Hlengwe group which belongs to the Thonga-Shangaan tribe. When inquiring into the past of these various clans, we find that many of them emigrated from the Nyai or Kalanga groups, countries in the South of Rhodesia. There are Malalanga amongst the Ba-Tswa, *viz.*, the clans of Khambane and Makwakwa called by the common name of Nwanati. The clan of Gamba, or Gwambe, also came from the North, and its emigration took place during the reign of the father of the chief whom Silveira baptised, *viz.*, in the beginning of the sixteenth century. This Kalanga origin is proved by some Native words quoted by the Jesuit fathers in their letters. Fernandez reports the following song as having been sung a great many times in Otongwe, the capital of Gamba:

Gombe zuca na virato ambuze capana virate,

* I propose, for the sake of clearness, to call the tribe near Inhambane, Tonga-Nyembane, to distinguish them from the Thonga-Shangaan (Thonga with an aspirated h) who occupy all the district of Lourenço-Marques and part of that of Inhambane.

Which he translates by:

> The ox has leather to make sandals, the goat has no leather to make sandals.

Gombe might be Nwombe, a word which Tonga-Nyembane use to say ox. But the Banyai also employ it and the word mbuze, or mbudzi, for goat, is not Tonga, but distinctly Nyai; the Tonga and the Chopi say phongo. Again the word Muzimo (Mudzimo), which the missionaries found meaning the spirits of the departed, is Nyai. Strange to say, to-day the Gwambe clan speaks the regular Chopi language. This fact is most interesting to note. It confirms the supposition to which I was led when inquiring into the past history of those tribes, *viz.*, as a rule, in this part of the world, the immigrating clans lose their idioms and adopt those of the primitive inhabitants in the course of time. Consequently, the languages which we find in these regions are the oldest monuments of human activity. Tribes and clans may have come and gone: the language has remained, whatever fluctuations and changes it may have undergone. Though it may form many dialects, it keeps its identity throughout the ages. Thus the study of the language helps to penetrate more deeply into the past than any other study.

Let us draw the following consequence of this rule regarding the Delagoa tribes. Diogo de Couto, speaking of the inhabitants of the Lebombo hills, says:

> The people of these forests speak the same language as the Vumo and the Anzete, their neighbours, and are all, men as well as women, of such a size that they seem giants.

The Vumo and the Anzetes are the Mpfumo and Tembe clans. According to all the traditions, the Mpfumo came from Zululand and the Tembe from the Makalanga country.* If the report is true, in 1580 already, they had both adopted the language of the Bay, the Ronga which is a dialect of the Thonga-Shangaan. If it is so, their arrival in the country must have taken place a long time before that date, as such a change of language cannot be accomplished in one generation. (The Ba-Ngoni of Gungunyane have still more or less preserved their idiom eighty years after their invasion of 1820-1830). This argument, which seems decisive, leads us to assert that the Tembe and Mpfumo clans were already settled in Delagoa Bay in 1450 (perhaps 1350), and that, before that date, the primitive population already spoke a language akin to the Ronga of to-day. I do not think any scientifically accurate statement can be made regarding Natives of South-Eastern Africa reaching further back in the past than this.

2. *Political and Social Life.*

If the Natives of 350 years ago were nearly the same tribes as to-day, were they very different as regards their form of gov-

* See "The Life of a South African Tribe." I, p. 21-23.

ernment and their degree of civilisation? Diogo de Couto seems to establish a great difference between the tribes round the Bay, including the Vambe of Natal and those further South, in the Southern part of Natal and Caffraria. The chiefs of the first were "kings" reigning over an extended area, mustering as many as 500 warriors, and this description also applies to the Inhambane clans, whilst the Caffrarian ones were only "ancosses" (*izinkosi*), headmen, heads and lords of three, four, five villages. Perestrello gives a similar account, saying that these Caffrarian Natives "do not go far from the place where they were born, and from the neighbourhood of the huts where they were created and die." For that reason they were unable to guide the party more than two days, and lost their way. This difference is also noted by Lavanha. He found a "captain of Inhaca," *viz.*, an induna, who had dispossessed an "ancosse," Gimbacucumba, on the southern border of the Tugela (V, p. 57), and he promised him to plead his cause when he should reach Inhaca's kraal. The Delagoa Natives were raiding as far as Zululand and further South in those times, whilst the reverse took place since the nineteenth century, after the rise of Chaka, as one knows. In fact, though Perestrello complains of the scarcity of food in the land of Inhaca, he describes the capital of this king as being quite an important place.

> It is not wanting in a certain polity and order of Government, for it is large and contains many people, with its squares and streets not very complicated, surrounded with a fence of very hard branches, high enough and well closed, with three or four openings at the convenient places.

This description perfectly answers to the "*ntsindja*," or capital of the Ronga chiefs some years ago, when they had still retained their full power.*

The same disintegrating influences acted then as now on the clans, *viz.*, younger brothers and sons of reigning chiefs wanted to make themselves independent and to found new political bodies. The son of Inhaca had tried to do so, but failed (V, p. 82). The chief used to place sub-chiefs in the remote places of his kingdom; thus, the sister of Inhaca was reigning in that capacity in the South of the country (V, p. 77). He had counsellors, called by the chroniclers "Capitão" and "Majorial." Moreover, these petty kingdoms lived in perpetual warfare with each other, and the tribes South of the Bay were hereditary foes of the Mpfumo chief (I, p. 133), on the Northern shore. This feud has persisted to the present day, and was one of the notable features in the war of 1894.

The social customs have not been studied with much care by our chroniclers; however, what they say regarding them is sufficient to show that they were the same as now. The Kaffirs were polygamists. Lavanha tells how the Chief Ubabu proudly

* *Cf.* "The Life of a South African Tribe," I, p. 392, illustration of the Tembe capital..

showed him his 200 oxen, his 200 sheep, his seven wives, and his numerous children. "They are very sensual, and have as many wives as they can afford, being very jealous about them." That polygamy was founded on *lobola* (cattle marriage), and that the wife bought was the property of the clan which purchased her, is proved by the fact that the missionaries of Gamba noticed with horror that their new converts inherited the widows of their dead relatives, and took them as wives, a custom which is one of the characteristic features of the social law of the South African Bantus.

Lavanha tells that all the clans south of 29° South Latitude were circumcised, and the Jesuit Fathers assert that the Tonga-Nyembane had the same custom, whilst the Makalanga were uncircumcised. When inquiring from those Tonga about the origin of the rite, they were told it was taught to the Natives by "a Moor of rank who came to these parts." This information is interesting, as it throws some light on the question of the origin of circumcision amongst the South African tribes. The Chopi and Tonga-Nyembane still circumcise the lads to-day, but they are convinced that this custom is their own, and deny that it has been introduced by strangers. The fact that Caffrarians, South of 29°, in a region not yet visited by the Arabs, followed the same rite, is altogether against the hypothesis of a semitic origin. Suppose, however, that the first idea came from the Arabs, the circumcision initiation, as it is now practised in South Africa and in many other parts of the Dark Continent, bears the Bantu character so strongly, that it can be said to have been thoroughly adapted to the circumstances and to the genius of these animistic tribes.

(3) *State of Civilisation.*

The *weapons* used by the Natives of the sixteenth century were already made of *iron*. In addition to the knobkerries, our chronicles mention "azagaias." Perestrello noticed them as far as 32° S. They were seen all through Caffraria, Natal and Zululand by his followers. The Gamba Natives had "bows, arrows and small assegais." Amongst the Tizombe, Lavanha also noticed hatchets of the typical South African form, which he describes as follows:—"They are like an edge fixed into a stick, and with it they also cut trees and carve dishes." Natives also used ox-hide shields.

The presence of assegais proves that Natives knew iron and even had great quantities of that metal at their disposal. Where did they procure it? They eagerly bought pieces of iron and nails from the crews of the wrecked ships, and the Portuguese so well knew the value attached to iron by Natives that those of the *San Thomé* and of the *San Alberto* burnt their wrecks in order to extract all what they could of the iron employed in the construction of the ships. Nuno Velho even ordered his men to destroy what they could not take with them in order not to

depreciate the valuable metal as a means of exchange. But it is evident that these few wrecks did not provide all the clans with their assegais. In Amatongaland the Natives possessed so many of them that, according to the highly coloured narrative of Perestrello, for two hours these assegais formed a cloud in the air! The South African Bantu must have known the art of metallurgy already in those remote times. So the iron foundries still met with in the Northern Transvaal are not a modern imitation of white methods.

Copper was also plentiful, at least on the borders of the Limpopo, and very much appreciated. It was used in the manufacture of large bracelets, of which the Inhaca chief wore many on his arms. No doubt these ornaments were also of Native make; the copper proceeded perhaps from the Palaora mine in Zoutpansberg, where certain Basuto have mined the ore extensively up to our times. On the other hand, *gold* and *silver* were quite unknown (V. p. 27); at any rate the *San Alberto* crew did not see any trace of them. This corresponds with the fact that there exist no indigenous words in the Thonga-Shangaan language to designate those two precious metals, whilst iron and copper are called *nsimbi* and *nsuku*, two typical Bantu words.

Implements appear to have been few: pots dried by the rays of the sun, wooden dishes are mentioned amongst the Tizombe. But basket work of the present type, which is evidently primitive, must have been present everywhere.

The *huts* had already their present round form, the two present patterns having been duly noticed by the *San Alberto* crew: the bee-hive hut of the Zulu (*redondas e baixas*, V. 21), and the hut provided with a wall and conical roof (*como as nossas choupanas de vinha*—"similar to our huts in the vineyards"), which is met with first at Inhaca's sister's village and is the typical dwelling of the Thonga-Shangaan. I found no description of Gama's huts. The villages were circular, surrounded by a fence (V. 21) with the cattle inside the enclosure.

The agricultural customs were also nearly on the same level as three centuries later, before the introduction of new and improved seeds. Perestrello was surprised to see the Inhaca people cultivating so little ground:

> The people of these parts, he says, live in forests, naked, without law, without custom, without clothing, and have no other wants which may induce them to gather provisions and keep the surplus which they may obtain in favourable times for times of scarcity. They live on roots and herbs which the bush provides, and sometimes on the flesh of elephants and hippopotami, without thinking of tilling the ground by the products of which they all live, chiefs as well as subjects.

This description, which is not very clear, does not prove that the Inhaca people did not cultivate fields, as they ate Kafir corn, but that they did so on a very small scale; so when a troop of sixty or seventy white people arrived amongst them they were not prepared for that eventuality which it was impossible to foresee, and the poor Portuguese suffered bitterly from hunger.

If we carefully study the Reports, we see that, in fact, the Natives possessed most of their present cereals. The most widespread was a grain called *nachenim* or *nachami*, or *nechinim* (a word, the origin or which I am unable to trace; it seems to be an Indian word); this grain is a seed similar to mustard, from which they make cakes (I. 136, 184; V. 51, 30° Lat. S.); it is called milho and alpistre by the Portuguese (I. 136), and is said to be the best means of subsistence of the land. It is of that cereal that the Inhaca king measured a certain quantity to each of his guests. No doubt this is the actual Kafir corn or millet. Perestrello also mentions a "milho zaburro" (I.88), and Lavanha another cereal called ameixoeira (V, 50); it is, if I am not mistaken, the Sorghum*; Nuno Velho found a vegetable called "jugo" in Natal (this is a kind of pea), and the "gergelim"; the travellers sometimes obtained beans, which were plentiful near Inhambane. Fernandez, in his tiresome journey to Gamba, enjoyed them immensely, and noticed that each pod contained sixteen beans. They are extensively cultivated to-day by the Thonga-Shangaan under the name of "timbawen." It seems that the country round Inhambane was more advanced as regards agriculture than any other on the coast, as we find also mentioned there "grains which grow beneath the ground," either the Kafir pea or the monkey nut.

The millet and sorghum were also prepared under the form of beer, which Lavanha calls "pombe," ecidently the *byala* or *tiwala* of which the Natives are so fond all over South Africa. This is a food as well as a beverage. The culinary customs were the same as to-day.

Caffraria and Natal were full of *oxen*. Nuno Velho counted as many as 100 at Luspance, and 200 at Ubabu (32° S.) He managed to buy some all along his journey. They were plentiful in the Inhaca island. Lavanha says about the Caffrarian cattle:

> Their meat is fat, tender and savoury; they are big; most of them are without horns (mocho) and the greater part are oxen,† which constitute the riches of the people; they sustain themselves on the milk and the butter made of it."

The Capridæ also were abundant, mostly sheep in Caffraria and Zululand (120 at Luspance, 200 at Ubabu), some of a large size and of the race of Ormuz; in Inhaca there were principally goats (I. 110; V. 82). Fowls are often mentioned at the same place, and amongst the Gamba people who "possess an abundance of cattle, large hens and fat cows, but few goats and sheep."

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* The word "ameixoeira," or "mexoeira," nowadays designates the small grey kaffir corn in Lourenço Marques. There must have been a confusion of terms in the Reports. Moreover, the chroniclers seem to consider these names as indigenous, which I believe is a mistake.

† The travellers noticed with amazement in one of the kraals an ox with four horns, two ordinary ones and two others under them pointing backwards; another ox had three horns proceeding from one which divided itself into three at the distance of one palm from the head (V. 58).

Hunting seems to have been more developed near Inhambane than in Delagoa Bay. Fernandez gives a vivid account of the manner in which Gamba men succeeded in killing elephants. The hunting party numbered as many as 150 men, and, after having forced the beasts into a narrow passage in the forest, tried to wound the legs so that the elephants would fall under the weight of their own bodies.

The way of *dressing* of all these tribes has not been clearly described by the travellers. The Natives are represented as naked in Caffraria (I. 76), and in Inhaca's country (I. 137). Lavanha, on the contrary, asserts that the Tizombe put on a coat of ox-hide with the hair outside, and, as regards the Inhambane clans, in 1560 already the women at Gamba's Court had adopted cotton clothing adorned with beads twisted together. This description exactly answers to the short skirts worn by all the Thonga-Shangaan women in the interior. The national costume, however, worn by common people, consisted of skins or strips of bark, and they already manufactured blankets by sowing together pieces of the bark of the *mphama* fig-tree. These blankets, which are remarkably strong, are called *ntjalu*. The taste for *ornaments* was very great, and was the real incentive for commercial transactions. Beads of Indian make, of red clay, were met by the shipwrecked men as far as 32° S. Father Fernandez minutely describes the horns which Gamba men made by twisting their hair in such a way "that the head was no longer to be seen." Some wore as many as ten of them! This seemed rather a worldly fashion to the missionary, and he asks one of his friends to forward to him a picture of the last judgment representing devils provided with horns in order to show his converts that this is altogether an infernal custom! I have not heard of any clan still practising this curious treatment of the hair.

(4) *The Psychic Life.*

Is it possible to get some glimpses of the mental life of the South African Bantus of the sixteenth century from these Reports? Occasional visitors, not knowing the language, are apt to make the greatest mistakes on such a subject. However, I discovered a few illusions in them which take a special interest when put in relation with what we actually know of Bantu rites and ideas. There are, of course, many more in the letters of the missionaries.

As regards the *moral character* of the race, it was so plain as to be at once detected. The curious mixture of generosity and selfishness, of good humour and of treachery, of mildness and of cruelty, which is still noticed in native morals, appears clearly in the relations they had with their first visitors. Fernandez puts one of these contrasts of the Bantu character in the following pleasing and apt way: "Though so poor, they are very proud, and each of them is a king of the woods!" In some cases they treated their unfortunate guests very badly. The

way in which the Mpfumo people robbed Manuel de Souza and his wife is most disgusting. But we must not forget that he was coming as a friend of Inhaca, the hereditary foe of Mpfumo, and that he had substantially helped that chief in a battle with another chief. Moreover, the party was proceeding with arms, fighting and sometimes killing the Natives, and the behaviour of Souza himself had been very imprudent. It seems to us very hard and offensive that these black people dared to deprive a Portuguese lady like Dona Laura of all her clothing; but remember that, on the question of modesty, they had not the slightest idea of the offence they were committing, as a little bit of clothing is quite sufficient in their opinion to answer all the exigencies of decency. In other cases, the hostility shown was the direct outcome of an attack on the part of the poor wrecked people who did not know how to behave. I recall only the crime of anthropophagy committed by some of the *San Thome's* party. On the other hand, one cannot help admiring the kindness shown by the Inhaca chief to the four caravans; their presence was a heavy burden for his people who had such scanty resources. He did not forget to work for his own interests and taxed them to the utmost; however, he showed himself a friend in need. As regards Nuno Velho of the *San Alberto*, he had almost no difficulty with all the tribes through which he passed, and this seems to be owing to the perfect atttitude he adopted towards the Natives; he always was just and good, preventing his people from robbing the least object, himself adorning the women and the children with the bits of coral or of crystal he paid for his purchases, treating black people as men. In the meantime, he was very firm and did not lose any occasion of asserting his prestige. So, when he killed a cow, he always did so by shooting it with a gun, and he called the Natives to witness the wonderful effect of his arms. They sometimes ran away, but he took them by the arm and reassured them. He would have made a perfect Native Commissioner!

The Portuguese saw very little of the *religion* of the Natives. Lavanha says:

> They are very wild (*brutos*) and do not adore anything, so they received our holy Christian law with great easiness. They believe that Heaven is another world similar to the world we live in, inhabited by other people who by running about cause the thunderstorms and by making water cause the rain.

This testimony is very short indeed, and one could hardly accept it as a trustworthy résumé of the subject. But when reading carefully our documents, we find traces of the two great sets of religious institutions, which a deeper study reveals amongst these tribes, *viz.*, the ancestor worship and the idea of Heaven.

The *ancestor worship*. The pilot of the *San Alberto* directly after the wreck saw the chief Luspance going with another

Native to the place where the sheep he had given to Nuna Velho had been skinned. He ordered this man (who was no doubt the priest of the family) to take some half digested grass in the bowels of the animal, and he threw it into the sea with words of thanksgiving, "for having brought Portuguese to his land as he expected great gain from them." Now, this is exactly the rite which takes place in most of the sacrifices of South African Bantu. This grass is called *psanyi* in Thonga, and its importance is fully shown in my description of Thonga Ancestrolatry.* The habit of throwing *psanyi* into the sea is practised exactly in the same way amongst some Thonga. It is an invocation to the spirits of the ancestor, who are buried near the sea, and are more or less confounded with the impersonal power of the sea itself, this rite showing the transition between a purely ancestrolatric and a naturist sacrifice.†

It is natural that the travellers had no opportunity of witnessing many manifestations of the ancestor worship, as they are generally purely private acts of the family life. Even the Jesuit fathers did not notice the details of it. They, however, heard Gamba people speak about "Muzimo," spirits which come at night to ask for food and they give them food and drink, placing it at the foot of a big green tree." These Muzimo are certainly the Manes, the spirits of the departed. Besides these Fernandez speaks of "Umbe" as being the name of God in the tribe. This Umbe is probably Mumbi, the Creator, or rather the "Former" of the world, from the root *ku bumba*, to make pots, a root very widespread in the Bantu languages. This God is often confounded with the *Sky* and the *Sun*, and Natives have a number of curious ideas about him which constitute what I called their deistic notion.

According to the Reports, White men are called by the Natives Sons of the Sun, "because they are white like the sun." Heaven is inhabited by mysterious beings which cause the thunderstorms and rain. This is almost the same superstition as that of the "balungwane" still met with amongst the Thonga-Shangaan; *balungwane*, little men who are said to inhabit heaven and look down to us. When they see a man walking on earth they sometimes discuss who he is. If not agreeing, they spit on the traveller; he looks to the sky to see where this unexpected drop of rain comes from; they then see his face, and thus they know him‡.

The fact that these mythical beings are called *balungwana*, diminutive of *balungo*, the name given to White people in Zulu and Thonga is interesting to note, and shows that the meaning of the word *balungo* might have been precisely: people of heaven.

The rescued people of the *San Thomé* having left a few sick Portuguese in the village of the chief of Inhampula, this man

* *Cf. op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 361-385.
† Vol. II, p. 299.
‡ See *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 405.

called the other members of the party and ordered them to remove the patients immediately, "because," said he, "the Natives did not want to see any people dying there, as the sun would be angry with them, and would not allow the rain to fall on the earth, and so there would be no fruit nor means of subsistence for the whole year." "They said so," adds Diogo de Couto, "because they believed that the Portuguese are sons of the sun, as they are white and fair" (IV. p. 122). The same superstition reigned at Inhaca, where the Portuguese had to bury their dead secretly. In the same way when Paolo de Lima and others died in Manhica, the Natives did not allow them to be buried in their ground; their graves had to be dug near the river. This is one of the most curious taboos of these tribes. They believe that Heaven (rather than the sun) is offended if any one dying an unnatural death is buried in dry ground. It would be more correct to say: If anyone dies having not been lawfully incorporated with the tribe by special rites: children dying before the ceremony of "tying the cotton string" (see Vol. I., p. 54), twins, and also strangers, as they may bear this objectionable character which irritates Heaven and brings the malediction on the land.

Thus the great taboos are not a new thing amongst our tribes. The same can be said of the sexual taboos and of the taboos of death. Natives of the Northern part of Natal hearing from the Portuguese that the cross they wore was such a sacred thing, kissed it as they saw the White people do, and asked them afterwards if they were allowed to have relations with their wives after they had received this holy sign. This is quite in keeping with the sexual taboos of Native initiation (V. 65). Lavanha reports that, at the death of a member of a kraal, they all break their huts into pieces and build in another place, believing that when one of the neighbours or relatives has died, everything will go wrong in the village (V. 21). This is the great law consequent to the taboo of death still observed in our days.

If the taboo superstitions were the same as to-day amongst the Natives of South Africa, their *magic* seems to have been also quite similar. Divination is practised amongst the Gamba people by casting lots with small shells stuck at the back with the wax of black wasps, and this consultation takes place in cases of disease and death. The Thonga-Shangaan of our days also use shells for the purpose, shells mixed with astragalus bones and various stones; certainly the system is the same. However, divination by the examination of the intestines of fowls and mice which Fernandez reports as common amongst the Gamba is no longer resorted to in these tribes, as far as I know.

Smelling out witches was of common occurrence. All the practices of witchcraft were known, and the accused were tried by the "*mondjo*" ordeal (called *motro*), *viz.*, by drinking a poisonous drug. I find, however, no traces of the exorcism of so-called possessed persons by drum-beating in our documents. The

disease of possession was perhaps not yet known, as this kind of nervous trouble seems to spread as an epidemic in certain times and under certain circumstances only.

The comparison might be pushed further, but this rapid survey is quite sufficient to prove that in the middle of the sixteenth century the Natives of South-East Africa, especially those of the shores of Delagoa Bay, were grouped in a manner very similar to that of to-day, three centuries later; they had the same customs, the same character, very nearly the same degree of civilisation.

That condition, according to all probability, was already an *ancient state of things*, at any rate nothing proves that it was of recent origin, and the unity of language, as already pointed out, proves that there had been no great change in the population of the country for a long time. The tribes lived in relative peace, and the migrations had not the sanguinary character of the Zulu raids of the last century: Gamba, the Mokalanga invader, was respected and estimated by his Tonga neighbours.

My conclusion is that we must be very prudent when we try to make hypotheses on the remote past of the South African tribes. Native traditions are of no avail, as we saw; comparison of the names of the tribes is delusory, as these names often are mere nicknames, or have not the same signification, or are merely designations of cardinal points, and mean, consequently, people of the East (Ba-Ronga), of the North (Ba-kalanga), etc.* The study of the language does not help much more, if really the emigrating clans adopt more or less completely the dialect of the people they subjugate, the men marrying the women of the land, and the women are always the best preservers of the language, at least amongst the uncivilised. Dialectic differences occasionally may help to trace the origin of certain clans. For all these reasons I ask to be allowed to remain sceptical when I see splendid maps showing the road which our tribes have followed since the time they severed from the Ur-Bantu stem till they reached their present abode. The Bantu tribes of South Africa are very, very old; their peculiar rites I am convinced, especially the belief in Heaven, are really primitive and not modern importations. This was the conclusion of my study of the life of a South African tribe.† I am glad to have found in these precious documents a confirmation of that impression.

* Thus, as regards the name Ba-Tonga.—There is a large tribe bearing that name on the Zambesi, in Northern Rhodesia, a much smaller group near Inhambane, the Tonga-Nyembane group, and the Thonga-Shangaan, of Delagoa Bay, the Zoutpansberg and Gazaland; but this similarity of name is no proof at all of a common origin or of special relations between these various tribes. Thonga, in Delagoa Bay, seems to be only the Zulu pronunciation of Ronga, the name of the clans round the Bay, and Ronga means East or dawn. They are the people of the East—for their Western neighbours! *Kalanga* means North, or at any rate, for the Ronga, Bakalanga people are the tribes of the North, irrespective of their origin, they say that their kinsmen of Khosen (Cossine or Magude) speak the Shikalanga, *viz.*, the language of the Ba-kalanga.

† Vol. II, p. 535.

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